

that means. What does it mean when you break a health system?

When I went to the doctor recently, no problem. I went in, saw him, got the prescription, and left. I needed hospital treatment, went in, had the surgery, and left. Everything worked fine. It was not broken.

I think the real problem is that our economy is broken. And I know in the State of Michigan, where I live, our unemployment rate for June is 15.2 percent. If people aren't working, they tend to lose their health care because they usually get it through their employer. Starting August 24 in Michigan, we expect an average of 18,000 people in Michigan to roll off unemployment insurance each month. By the end of 2009, we expect to have 99,000 people who have lost their benefits. That is the problem we must address.

We have to get people back to work, and when they get back to work, they will get their health care back.

PEOPLE ARE NOT WAITING IN LINE TO LEAVE THIS COUNTRY FOR HEALTH CARE; IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND

(Mr. WAMP asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I have said it many times on this floor: Neither party has an exclusive on integrity or ideas. And these challenges are not Republican challenges or Democratic challenges; they are, in fact, American challenges.

But I have to tell you a few years ago, a Republican President with a Republican Congress, he proposed sweeping changes to immigration policy, but those changes kind of flew in the face of the rule of law, they threatened our sovereignty, and Republicans said "no."

Here we are today. All of us want our President to be successful. But the Democratic Party needs to look at the President and say, This is not what we need to protect our health care system. We need to change it. We need to reform it. We need to improve it. But we don't need government control of health care. It's too important.

Eighty-five percent of the people in this country today are satisfied with their health care, and they are afraid that this new proposal will put that in jeopardy.

This is a matter of life or death. People are not waiting in line to leave this country for health care; it's the other way around.

UNDER THE PROPOSED HEALTH CARE PLAN, MEDICAL CARE WILL BECOME EVEN MORE EXPENSIVE

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, in the early 1990s, I went to a reception in

Lebanon, Tennessee, and the doctor who delivered me came and brought my records. I asked him how much he charged back then, and he said he charged \$60 for 9 months of care and the delivery if they could afford it.

Before the Federal Government got so heavily involved in medical care, medical care was cheap and affordable by almost everyone, and doctors even made house calls.

Then the Federal Government got into the business and costs exploded. In fact, the predictions on Medicare and Medicaid, it costs about 10 times more after 25 years than what was predicted.

The same thing will happen on the health care plan that is before the Congress today. The costs will far exceed the predictions. Medical care will become even more expensive and more unaffordable. In fact, Mark Levin, the radio commentator, said a few nights ago that it will put massive costs over onto the States to expand their Medicare programs, and then States like mine of Tennessee, which don't have an income tax, will be forced into having one.

This plan is not good, especially for the poor and lower-income people.

AMERICA'S AFFORDABLE HEALTH CHOICES ACT

(Ms. TSONGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the important responsibility in front of us on health care reform.

The cost of inaction will undoubtedly bear a heavier burden on individuals, families, small business owners, and our economy the longer we delay. Without reform the cost of health care for the average American family is expected to rise \$1,800 every year, with no end in sight. If we don't act, 14,000 Americans will continue to lose their health insurance every single day.

The America's Affordable Health Choices Act has helped our Nation begin to tackle this issue in a meaningful way. Already we have agreed that this bill must prevent insurance companies from denying coverage based on your medical history or dropping your coverage when you are sick. This is a key and needed reform that will stop insurers from gaming the system by covering only healthy people.

Right now insurance companies decide whether or not to cover you for a procedure. If a procedure is deemed too experimental, for example, it may not be covered. If it is too expensive, you are responsible for paying the costs of it after a certain point.

If we do not take the steps to regulate insurance industry practices now, American families will see their coverage shrink and costs go up.

OUR PRIORITY SHOULD BE TO GET HEALTH CARE REFORM RIGHT

(Mr. MCCARTHY of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I was in a meeting with a microcosm of small businesses around the United States. We met inside this Capitol. We talked about health care. We talked about ways to reform health care, to bring the costs down, the quality up, to be able to have greater accessibility, to be able to have the ability to move from job to job and have health care coverage, to be able to have choice and quality.

And when I sat around this table with small business owners, one of the individuals owned a Kentucky Fried Chicken, one owned a pizza establishment, and he talked about going from 45 employees to 35. He said if this health care bill, as proposed, as is written today, his question will not be, will he have to lay people off; the question will be, will he shut down? He will have to close his business if this bill passes this week.

I ask that we spend our priority not on how much time we have to pick a dog but how much time we actually have to do health care right.

SHOP ACT/HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. GERLACH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about the House Democrat health care reform package and its impact on small businesses and jobs.

At a time when our Nation's unemployment rate is approaching 10 percent, this legislation would impose new surtaxes on high-wage earners to pay for reform. The reality is that this is not a tax on the rich, as many would claim, but rather a tax on small business owners, who provide 70 percent of the jobs in the United States. And if enacted, these taxes could cost 4.7 million more jobs to be lost.

Now is not the time to be pushing legislation that would cause even more Americans to lose their jobs. Instead, we need to focus our ways and our attention on ways to make health care more affordable for small business owners so that they can meet the needs of the health of their employees and stay in business. That is why we should allow small businesses to band together in statewide and nationwide pools to obtain lower insurance premiums and provide a tax credit for small business owners and the self-employed. We need to help small business owners with the right health care reform, not legislation that just raises their taxes in these tough economic times.